



## After Uvalde: Public Schools In Texas Send Home DNA Kits For Kids

### Description

**USA: What a great message to parents and kids: when the next shooting occurs, we will need your kid's DNA for positive identification after he is shot dead. This was actually set into law by the Texas legislature in 2021 (see below) and apparently received little resistance from parents or educators.**

EDUCATION CODE

TITLE 2. PUBLIC EDUCATION

SUBTITLE F. CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

CHAPTER 33. SERVICE PROGRAMS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SUBCHAPTER A. SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS

*Sec. 33.0531. CHILD IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM. (a) The agency shall provide to all school districts and open-enrollment charter schools inkless, in-home fingerprint and DNA identification kits to be distributed through the district or school on request to the parent or legal custodian of any kindergarten, elementary, or middle school student.*

*(b) A parent or legal custodian who receives a fingerprint and DNA identification kit may submit the kit to federal, state, tribal, or local law enforcement to help locate and return a missing or trafficked child. ?  
TN Editor*

This week, Texas public schools plan to distribute DNA and fingerprint identification kits to guardians of students in kindergarten through middle school. The Child Identification Program, which [became a law](#) in 2021, requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to provide inkless in-home fingerprint and DNA identification cards to the guardians of children in the public school system in the state.

After DNA is gathered, the parent or legal guardian is asked to hold onto the child identification cards for law enforcement use in cases of emergency including if they go missing or are suspected of being human trafficked.

The program is entirely opt-in for parents and guardians, but experts warn of the message it sends to

children, particularly in light of the Uvalde shooting on May 24, when 19 children were killed by an armed gunman and parents were asked to provide DNA samples to help identify the victims.

Kenneth Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services, a school safety consulting firm, says he can see the value for parents, but cautions about what he calls “security theater”—the visible actions that may make people feel emotionally safer but actually have little effect on safety.

“I can just envision a kid coming home and the parent saying ‘Hi, how was your school day?’ and the kid reaches in the backpack, pulls out a DNA kit and says, ‘Here—our principal sent this home with us so we have all this information when the shooting occurs and if I get killed,’” Trump, who is not related to the former U.S. president, told Motherboard.

According to the K-12 School Shooting Database, nearly 60 percent of active shooter incidents at educational institutions since Columbine in 1999 have occurred in high schools. Despite an increase in active shooting incidents occurring on school grounds across the country, Trump worries that sending DNA kits home as an official action of the school or governmental agency with children will undoubtedly send the message that school shootings are imminent.

“There needs to be a really strong messaging around this to make it clear that school shootings are low probability but high impact incidents,” he added. “One school shooting is one too many, but statistically we know that fortunately the vast majority of schools will never experience a mass shooting and you want to take steps that are reasonable. But you don’t want to create unintended consequences where you do more harm than good and the context where everyone’s in a state of high anxiety.”

Scott Poland, a psychology professor at Nova Southeastern University in Florida and director of the Suicide and Violence Prevention Office also wonders if sending children home with ID kits send the right message.

“Is there another reason why we would be fingerprinting kids, except like thinking of identifying bodies?” Poland asks Motherboard. “I mean, that’s the part that really worries me about what exactly is behind this and then, maybe most importantly, how do we convey this to kids in a way that doesn’t sound like ‘I don’t think you’re going to be abducted and I don’t think I’m going to have to identify your body.’”

Poland says that school administrators need to remember who they are dealing with—impressionable kindergarten, elementary, and middle schoolers.

“We need to be very careful and very cognizant of the developmental level of children,” he said. “So I think sometimes we’re very well-meaning but maybe we’ve gone a little far and I’m not sure it’s, you know, the best place to focus our money if we had to do with kids’ safety.”

POSTED BY: CLAIRE WOODCOCK

### Category

1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Main
3. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

### Date Created

10/21/2022